

No. 41 Rs. 4/-

CHHATRASAL

THE FOUNDER OF THE KINGDOM OF BUNDELKHAND

C.M.Vitankar

With his own might the dauntless warrior, Chhatrasal, founded the kingdom of Bundelkhand. The country was then ruled by Aurangzeb who aspired to bring all the states of the country under his thumb. But there were numerous freedom-loving warriors who thwarted his dreams and the more he strived to subdue them the more powerful they became. In this context, the stories of the brave deeds of Shivaji and Chhatrasal have become an immortal and glorious part of our history.

Chhatrasal met Shivaji to receive his [illegible] and guidance. Inspired by him, Chhatrasal continued to display the prowess of his sword all his life. From the tender age of eighteen to the ripe old age of eighty, his was a life of war and struggle. But his sword never tired of fighting the enemy.

To this day the legends of Chhatrasal's valour and courage are retold with a great sense of pride.

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CHHATRASAL

IN A DENSE JUNGLE, AS NIGHT APPROACHED, A BOY SAT UNDER A TREE - SAD AND FORLORN.

AN OLD MAN HAPPENED TO PASS THAT WAY. HE WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THE LONELY BOY.

WHO ARE YOU, SON? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE IN THIS JUNGLE?

FIRST TELL M WHO YOU ARE!

I AM MAHABALI, THE OIL MAN. MY VILLAGE IS CLOSE BY. CAN I BE OF ANY HELP TO YOU?

I AM CHHATRASAL, THE YOUNGER SON OF CHAMPATRAI, THE BUNDELA WARRIOR MY PARENTS ARE DEAD.

I AM SORRY TO HEAR THAT. I WAS ONCE THEIR SERVANT. WHAT HAPPENED? HOW DID THEY DIE?

THERE WAS A SURPRISE ATTACK BY THE MUGHAL TROOPS. THEY WERE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED...

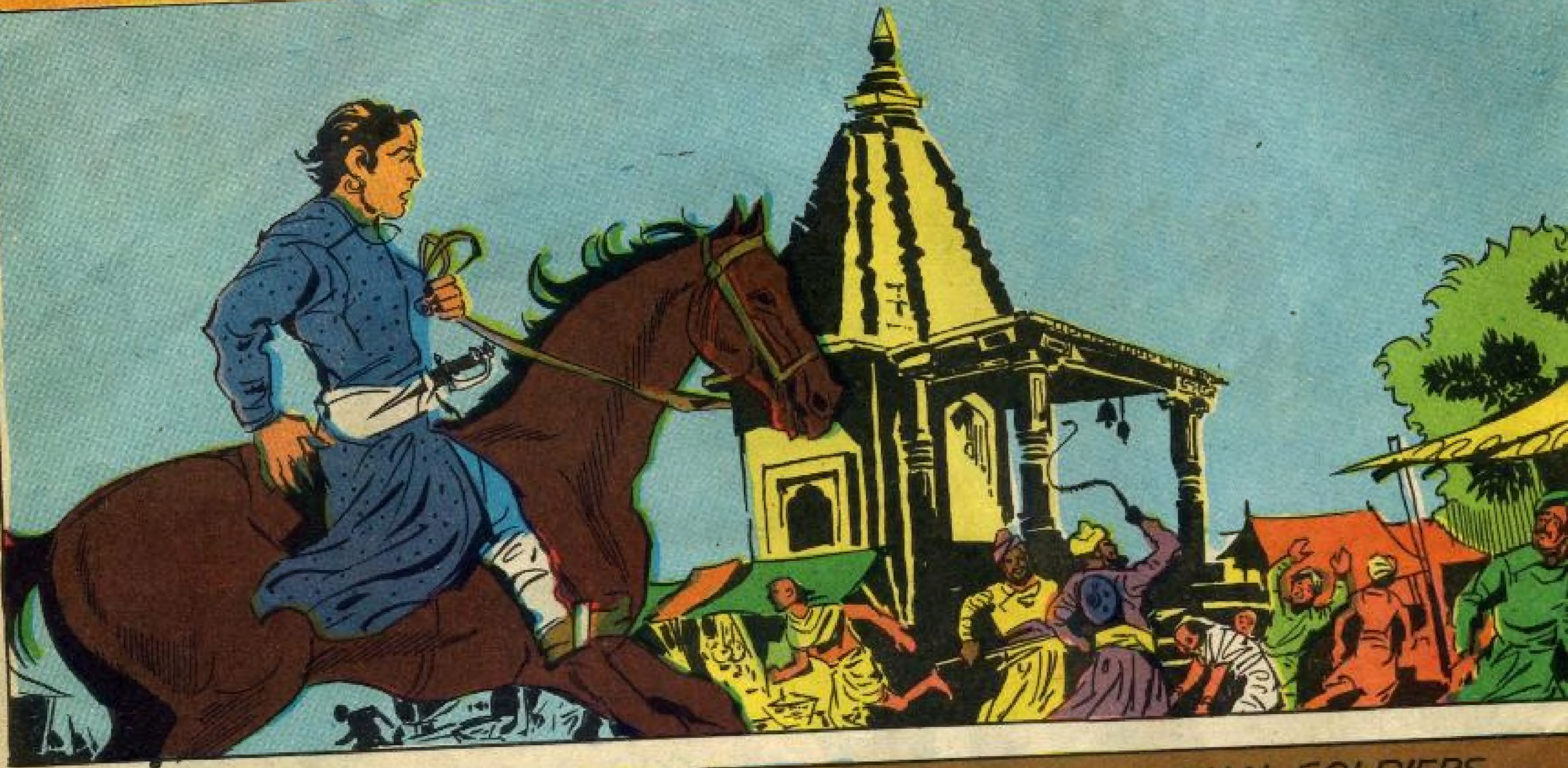


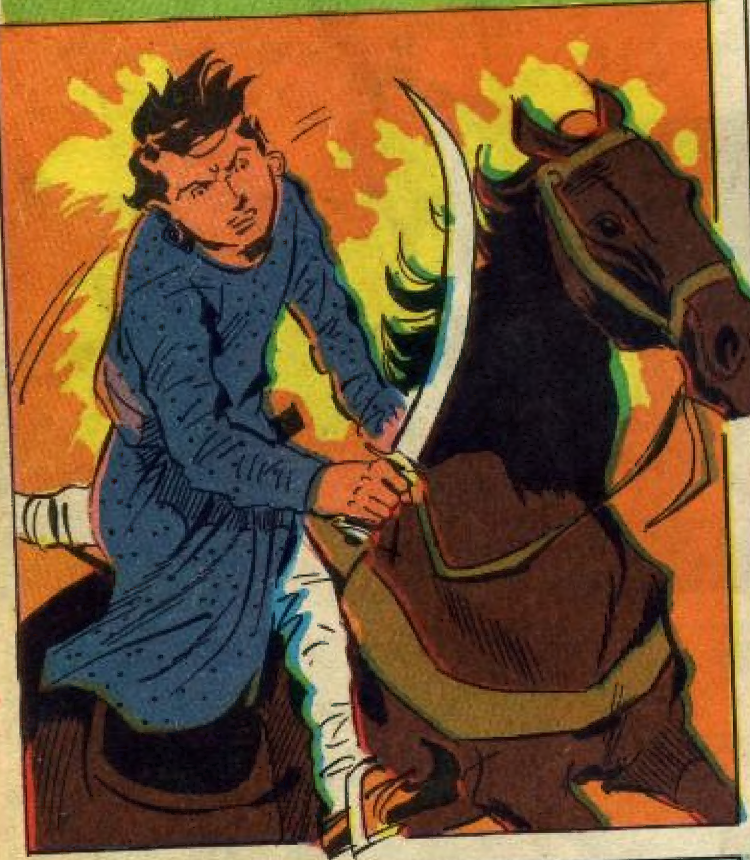

"THEY PREFERRED DEATH TO THE HUMILIATION OF BEING CAPTURED AND STABBED EACH OTHER.


I ESCAPED. I WILL AVENGE THE FATE OF MY PARENTS.


I WAS ON THE WAY TO MY UNCLE'S VILLAGE.
COME HOME WITH ME. COME SON. SPEND THE DAY AT MY PLACE. REST FOR A WHILE BEFORE YOU PROCEED.


AFTER A DAY'S REST, CHHATRASAL LEFT FOR HIS UNCLE'S VILLAGE.


ON THE WAY, HE SAW TWO MUGHAL SOLDIERS HARASSING DEVOTEES OUTSIDE A TEMPLE.


YOUNG CHHATRASAL BLIND WITH RAGE...


... CHARGED AT THE MUGHAL SOLDIERS...


...AND KILLED BOTH OF THEM.

WHO ARE YOU?

I AM CHHATRASAL, A SON OF THE BUNDELA WARRIOR CHAMPATRAI.

LONG LIVE CHHATRASAL!

GLORY BE TO CHHATRASAL!

MEANWHILE, SUJANRAI, HIS UNCLE, WAS WORRIED.

NO WORD FROM CHHATRASAL– HIS WELL BEING, HIS WHEREABOUTS. COULD THE MUGHALS HAVE CAPTURED HIM?

ONE DAY–

SIR, LOOK! SOMEONE IS COMING.




YOU - CHHATRASAL! THANK GOD YOU ARE SAFE. I WAS WORRIED.

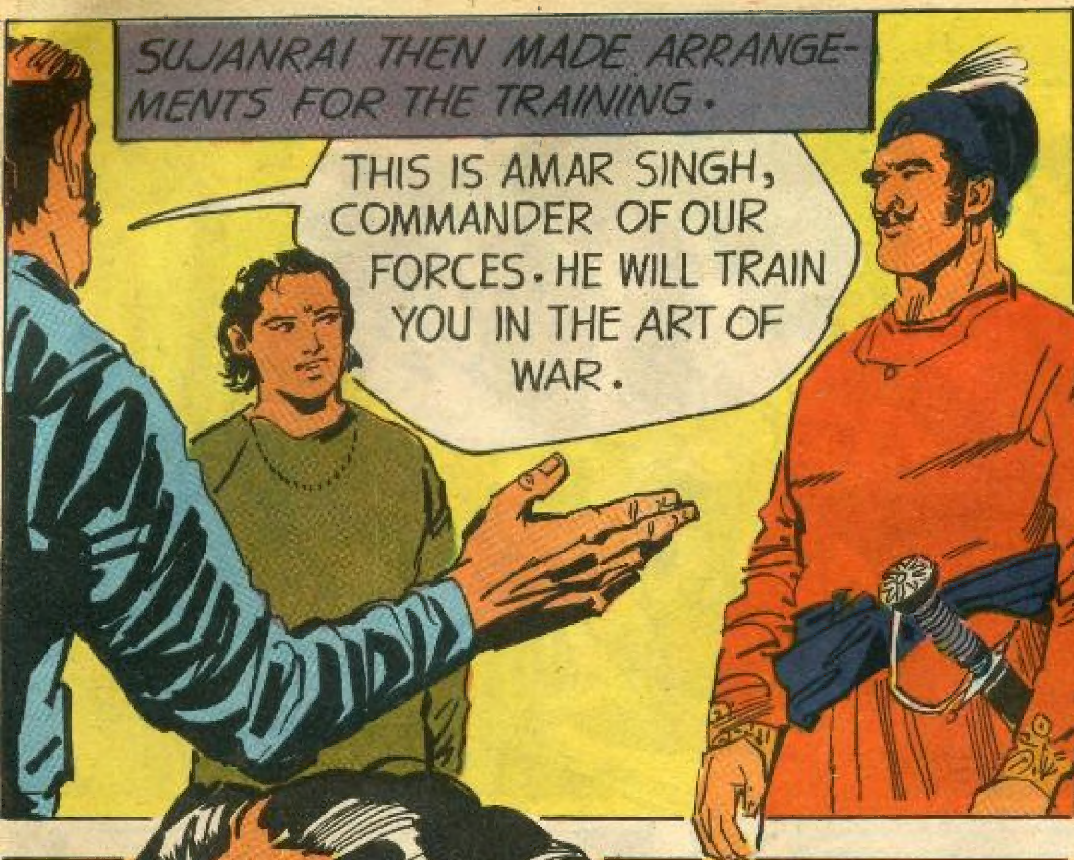



WHY DID YOU TAKE SO LONG TO COME?
I HAD TO PASS THROUGH MUGHAL TERRITORY.


A FEW DAYS LATER—
WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS?


MY PARENTS MUST BE AVENGED. I MUST FOUND A BUNDELA KINGDOM.


A WORTHY AMBITION. BUT IT IS NOT EASY TO FIGHT THE MUGHAL ARMIES YOU MUST FIRST LEAR THE ART OF WARFARE.


SUJANRAI THEN MADE ARRANGE-MENTS FOR THE TRAINING.
THIS IS AMAR SINGH, COMMANDER OF OUR FORCES. HE WILL TRAIN YOU IN THE ART OF WAR.


AFTER FOUR YEARS OF TRAINING-

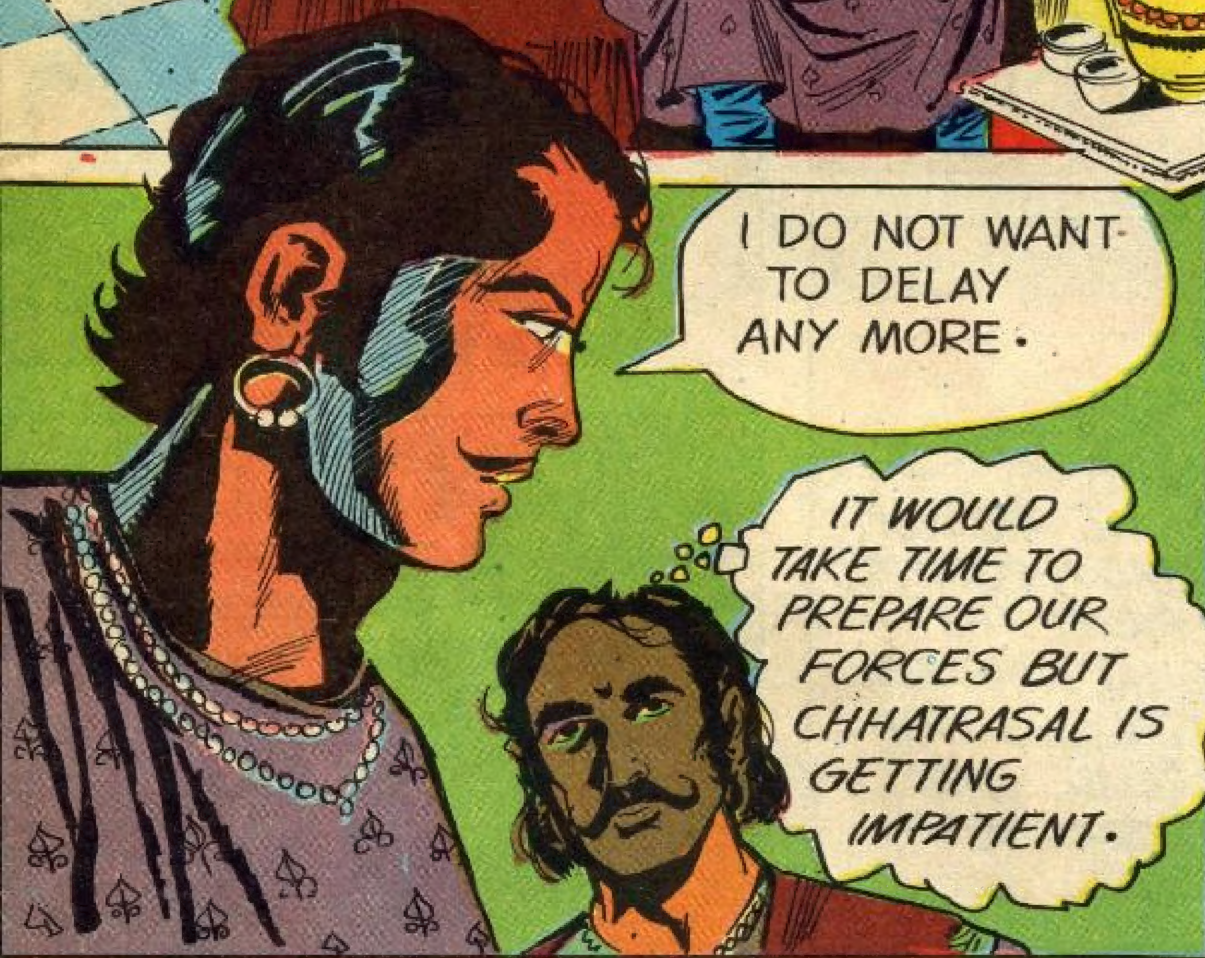

WE ARE NOW READY; EQUIPPED TO FIGHT THE MUGHALS. BUT MY UNCLE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE VERY ENTHUSIASTIC.


ONE DAY HE LEARNT OF THE WHEREABOUTS OF ANGADRAI, HIS BROTHER, FROM A TRAVELLER.
YOUR BROTHER IS SKILLED IN THE ART OF WAR.
I MUST GO TO HIM.


CHHATRASAL LEFT THE PLACE WITHOUT INFORMING SUJANRAI...

...AND CAME TO HIS ELDER BROTHER ANGADRAI.

I AM BENT ON AVENGING OUR PARENTS' DEATH AND ESTABLISHING A BUNDELA KINGDOM.





SOON ENOUGH, CHHATRASAL WAS MARRIED TO DEVKUNWAR, THE DAUGHTER OF A PANWAR FEUDAL LORD.




WE HAVE ALREADY WASTED QUITE SOME TIME. WE MUST NOW GET BUSY.

TO BE SURE - BUT AFTER DUE THOUGHT AND CONSIDERATION.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
BEFORE GOING TO WAR, WE HAVE TO COLLECT ENOUGH FUNDS AND FORCES, AND ALSO STUDY THE WAR STRATEGY OF THE MUGHALS.

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO STUDY THEIR STRATEGY?

LET US GO TO RAJA JAISINGH. HE IS THE CHIEF OF THE MUGHAL FORCES. BUT REMEMBER, NO ONE SHOULD GUESS OUR REAL INTENTIONS.



WHAT? YOU, THE SONS OF CHAMPATRAI, HERE TO ENLIST IN THE MUGHAL ARMY? COULDN'T YOU GET ANY OTHER JOB?

WE ARE WARRIORS. YOU ARE A WARRIOR, TOO. WE CAME IN THE HOPE THAT YOU WOULD APPROPRIATELY HONOUR US.

YES, OF COURSE. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO BE SURE OF YOUR INTENTIONS.

DON'T QUESTION OUR INTENTIONS. ISN'T IT ENOUGH THAT WE ARE THE SONS OF CHAMPATRAI?

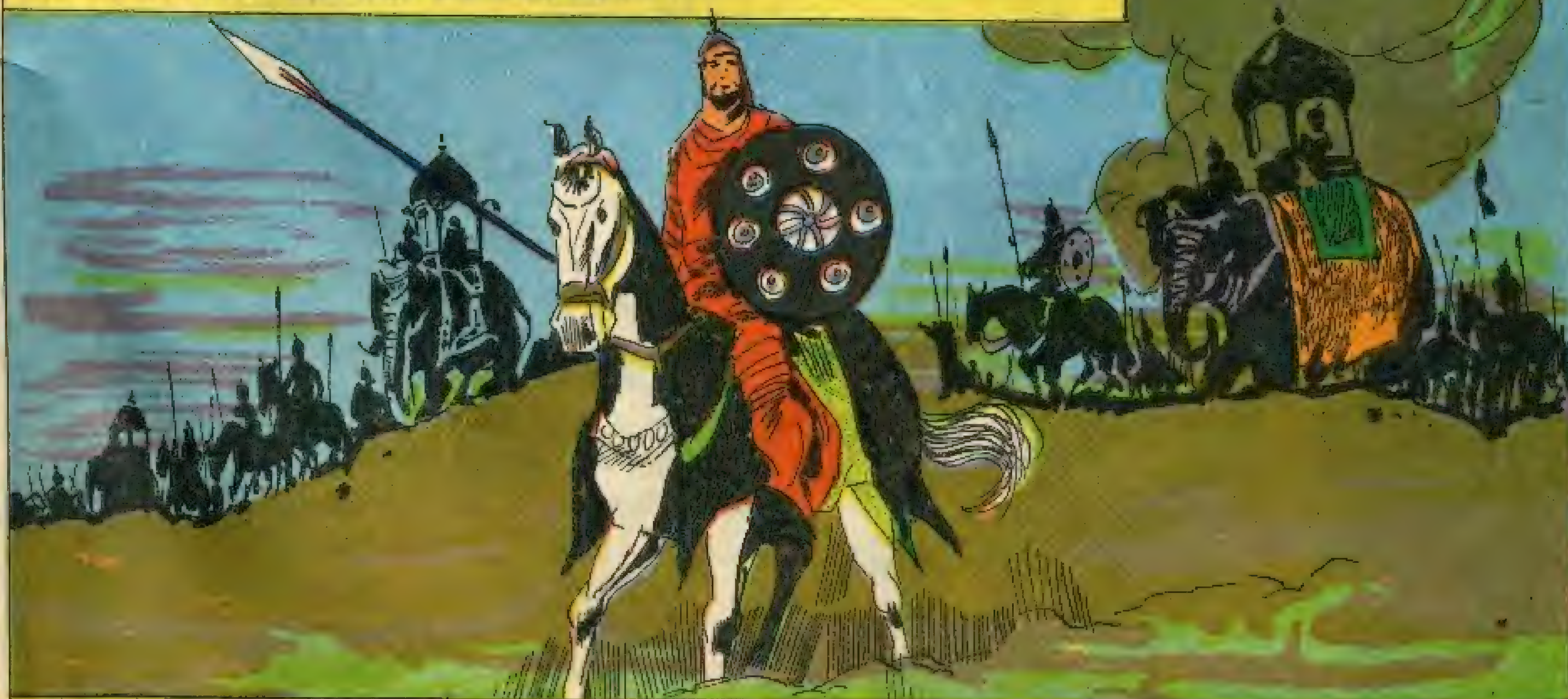
CHAMPATRAI WAS NO DOUBT A BRAVE WARRIOR, BUT HE WAS NOT A FRIEND OF THE MUGHALS.

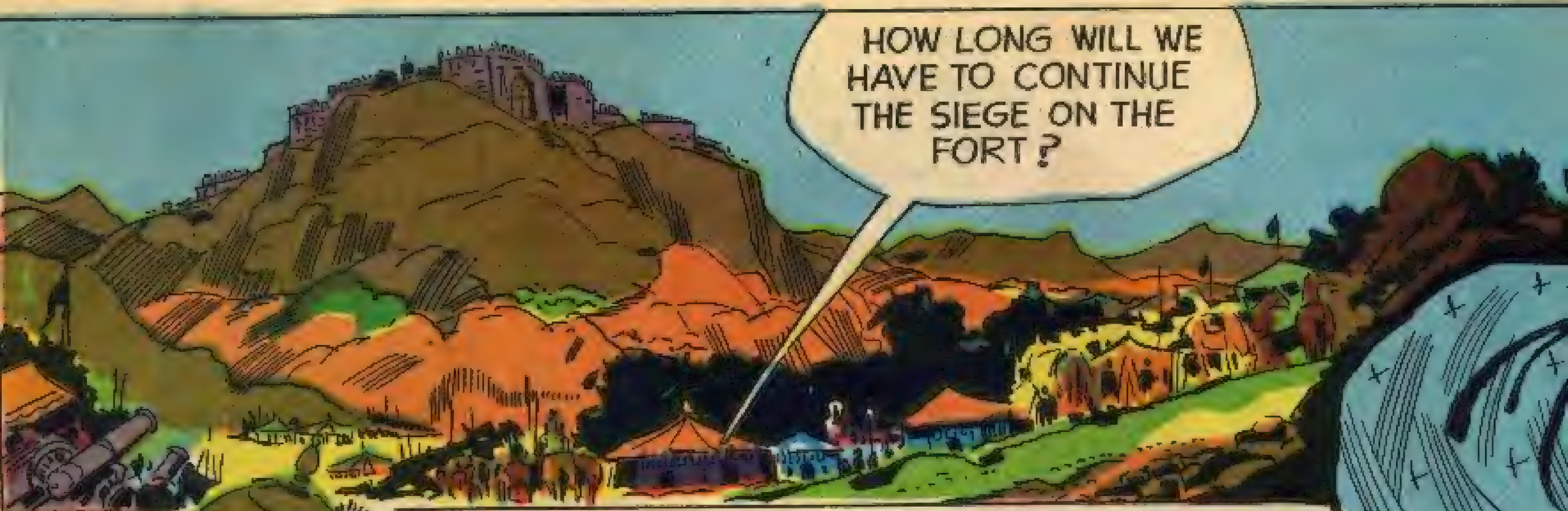
WE ARE HERE TO MAKE AMENDS. GIVE US A CHANCE.

ALL RIGHT. GO AND SEE BAHADUR KHAN, OUR COMMANDER.

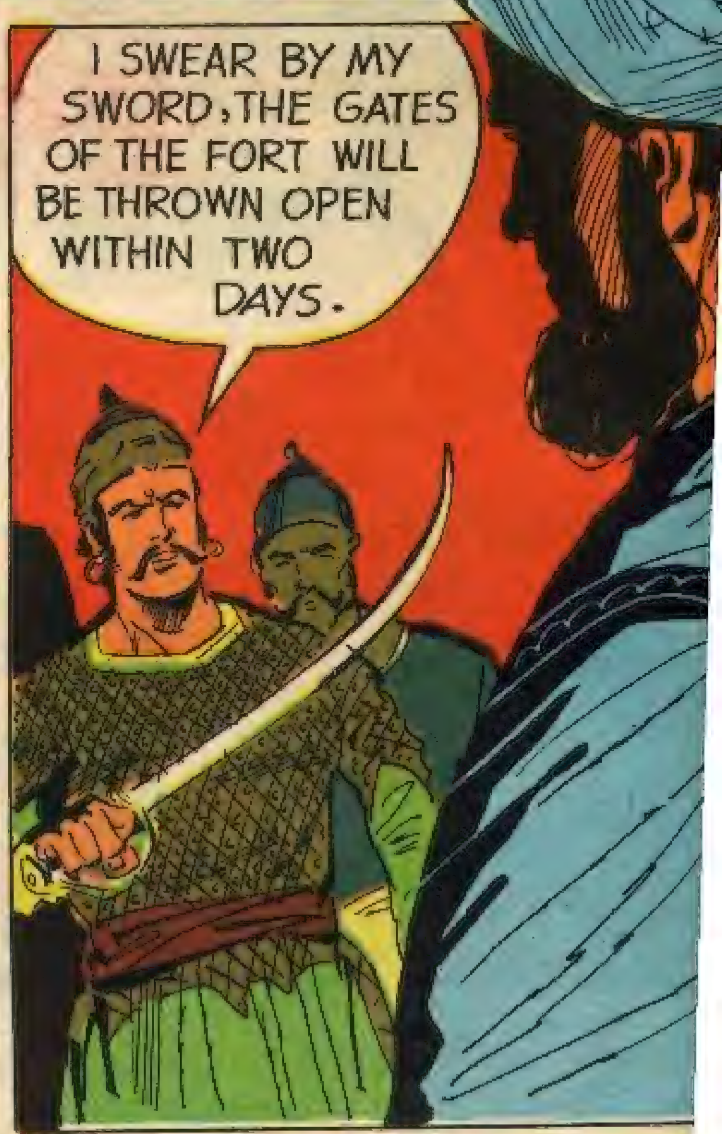

WELCOME, BUNDELA WARRIORS. WE ARE PROUD OF YOUR BEHAVIOUR.
GIVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE OUR METTLE.

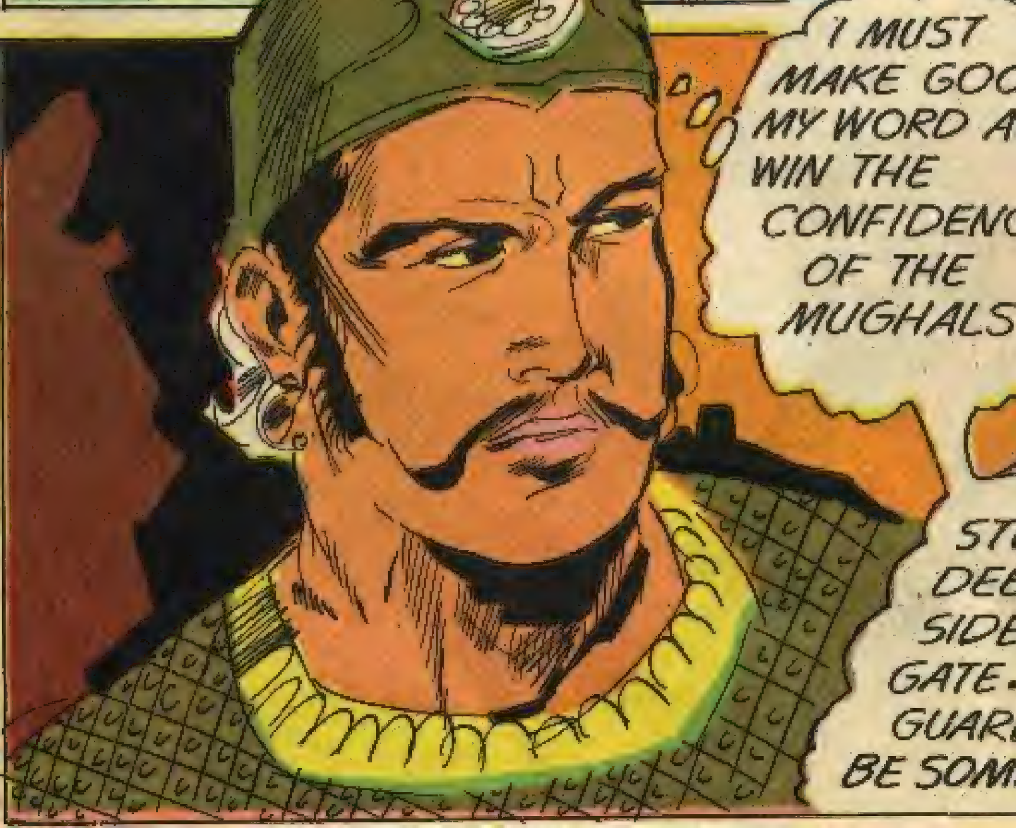

KURMAMAL, THE RULER OF DEOGARH HAS RISEN IN REBELLION.
WE SHALL HELP YOU SUPPRESS IT.

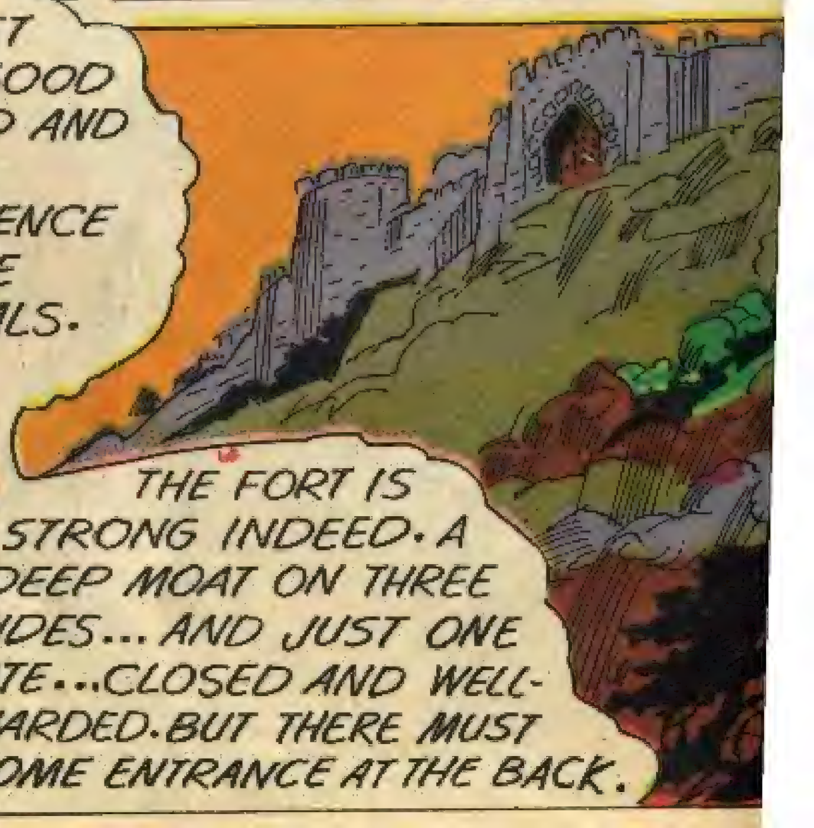

UNDER THE COMMAND OF BAHADUR KHAN, THE MUGHAL ARMY MARCHED TO DEOGARH.


HOW LONG WILL WE HAVE TO CONTINUE THE SIEGE ON THE FORT?


KURMAMAL IS REPORTED TO HAVE ENOUGH PROVI-SIONS IN THE FORT, TO LAST SIX MONTHS.
BUNDELA WARRIORS, THE HIGH REPUTE OF BAHADUR KHAN IS NOW IN YOUR TRUST.


I SWEAR BY MY SWORD, THE GATES OF THE FORT WILL BE THROWN OPEN WITHIN TWO DAYS.


I MUST MAKE GOOD MY WORD AND WIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE MUGHALS.


THE FORT IS STRONG INDEED. A DEEP MOAT ON THREE SIDES... AND JUST ONE GATE...CLOSED AND WELL-GUARDED. BUT THERE MUST BE SOME ENTRANCE AT THE BACK.

THERE . WHAT IS THAT? LIGHT FROM ACROSS THE THICK WALL? A SECRET ENTRANCE . I GUESSED RIGHT.

THE NEXT MORNING –

I AM GOING TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FORT. I WILL TRY TO ENTER AND OPEN THE GATE– YOU KEEP THE TROOPS ALERT.

CHHATRASAL FOUND THE SPOT HE HAD LOCATED THE PREVIOUS NIGHT AND SPURRED HIS MOUNT INTO THE MOAT.





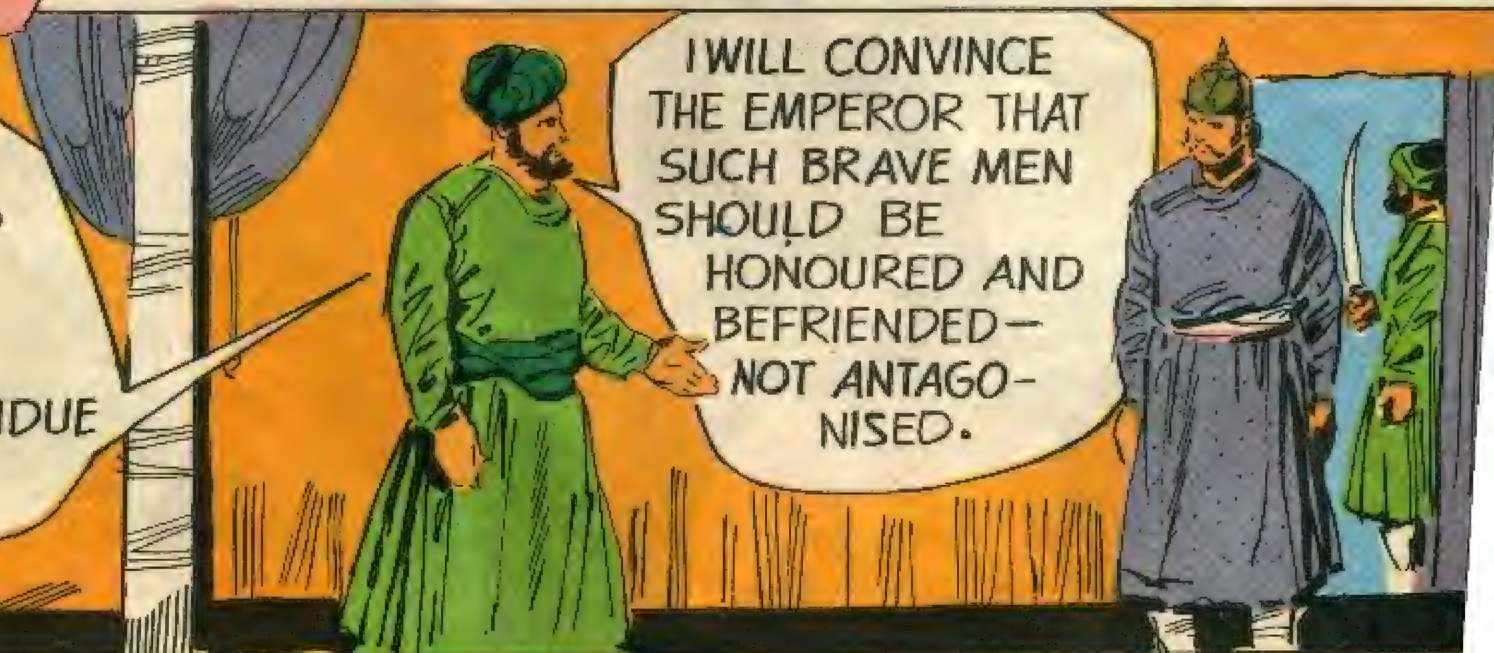
HE ENTERED THE FORT THROUGH THE SECRET ENTRANCE.

AND THE MUGHAL ARMY CONQUERED DEOGARH.

THE EMPEROR HAS SENT ME HIS CONGRATULATIONS. HE HAS CALLED US TO DELHI. YOU TOO WILL COME.

WHY SHOULD I? DEOGARH WAS WON BY YOU.





IN DELHI, THE COURT OF THE MUGHAL EMPEROR, AURANGZEB –

BAHADUR KHAN, I CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR VICTORY OVER DEOGARH.

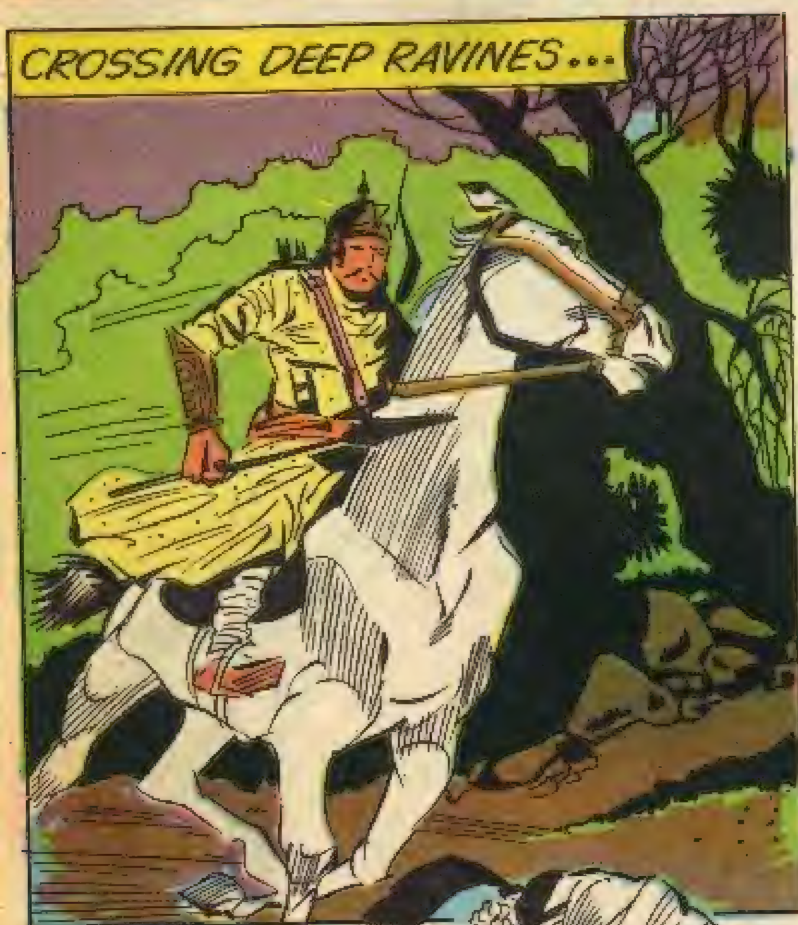
IF IT MAY PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY, CONGRATULATE CHAMPATRAI'S SON, CHHATRASAL. IT WAS HE WHO WON DEOGARH.

O! THE SON OF CHAMPATRAI SHOULD BE HAPPY THAT I HAVE NOT ORDERED HIM BEHEADED.

I DON'T BEG FOR FAVOURS. I HAVE MY SWORD TO HELP ME TAKE WHAT IS MINE.

ARREST HIM!


THE ONE TO ARREST CHHATRASAL IS YET TO BE BORN.


CROSSING DEEP RAVINES...

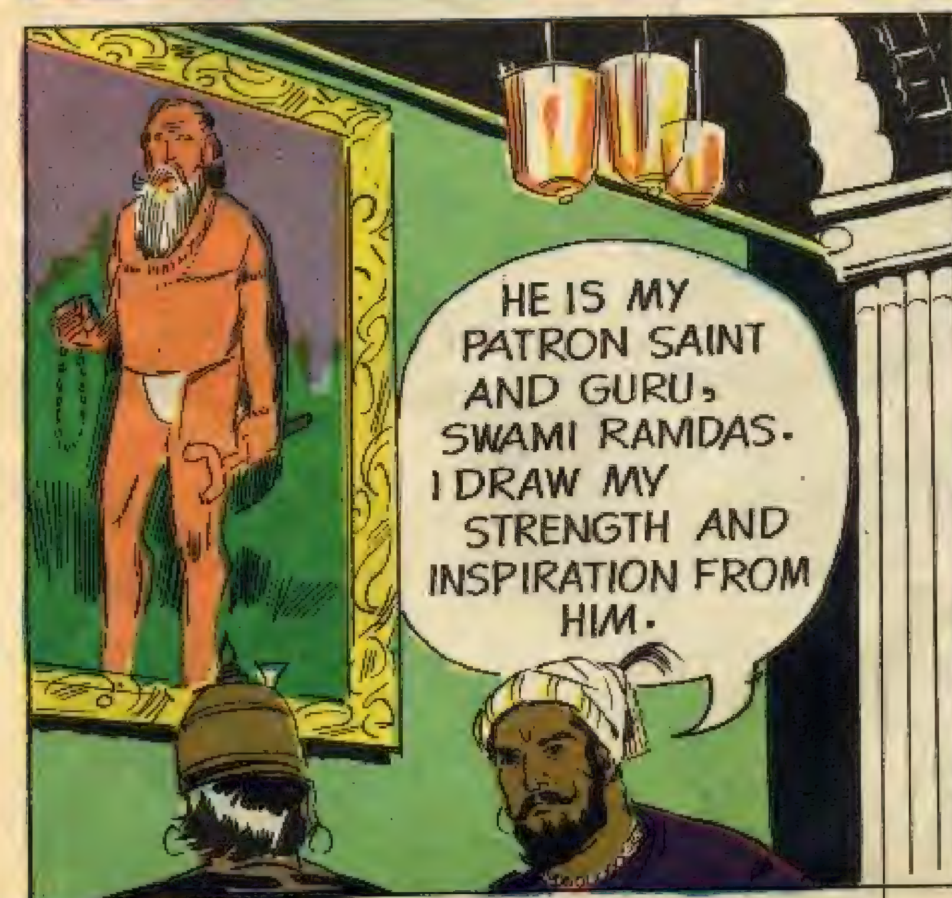

... FIELDS ...


... AND RIVERS, CHHATRASAL HEADED TOWARDS THE SOUTH – TO MEET CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI.


AT SHIVAJI'S COURT–
I GOT WORD SOON AFTER YOU LEFT DELHI.
REALLY! SIR, YOUR INTELLIGENC NETWORK MUST BE UNMATCHED


I WANT TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT KING-DOM. HOW SHALL I GO ABOUT IT?
INTELLIGENTLY.


THE MUGHAL ARMY IS STRONG IN NUMBERS BUT IT ALWAYS FAILS TO WITHSTAND SURPRISE ATTACKS. WE HAVE OFTEN PROFITED BY THIS SHORT-COMING OF THEIRS.
I WILL BEAR THAT IN MIND. THANK YOU SIR.
WHOSE PICTURE IS THAT, SIR?


HE IS MY PATRON SAINT AND GURU, SWAMI RAMDAS. I DRAW MY STRENGTH AND INSPIRATION FROM HIM.


YOU HAVE GIVEN ME FRESH INSPIRATION. I NOW FEEL CONFIDENT THAT SOONER OR LATER, SUCCESS WILL BE MINE.

I AM SURE YOU WILL NEVER BRING DISHONOUR TO THIS GIFT OF MINE.

THEN CHHATRASAL RETURNED TO BUNDELKHAND. THERE HE WORKED FOR THE SUPPORT OF HIS PEOPLE.

OUR PEOPLE HAVE SUFFERED ENOUGH UNDER THE TYRANNY OF THE MUGHALS.

MAHARAJ CHAMPATRAI WAS OUR LEADER. WE ARE INDEBTED TO HIM. WE WILL DO WHATEVER YOU COMMAND US TO DO.

BUT HE WAS HONEST WITH THEM.

IF WE RISE IN REBELLION WE MAY HAVE TO PAY FOR IT—PROBABLY WITH OUR LIVES.

IT DOES NOT MATTER!

WE WILL... WE WILL..

AND HE HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN WINNING THEIR TRUST.

WE ARE YOUR SUBJECTS. THIS YEAR WE WILL PAY ALL TAXES TO YOU. YOU HAVE OUR TOTAL SUPPORT.

BUT CHHATRASAL FOR THE FIRST TIME WAS DOUBTFUL.

MY ARMY IS SMALL AND TOTALLY INADEQUATE TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING.

ON A DARK NIGHT CHHATRASAL WAS RESTLESSLY WANDERING ABOUT IN THE FOREST.

I NEED GUIDANCE. I WISH I HAD A GURU.


AS IF IN ANSWER TO HIS PRAYER –
A LIGHT? I THOUGHT THIS FOREST WAS UNINHABITED.

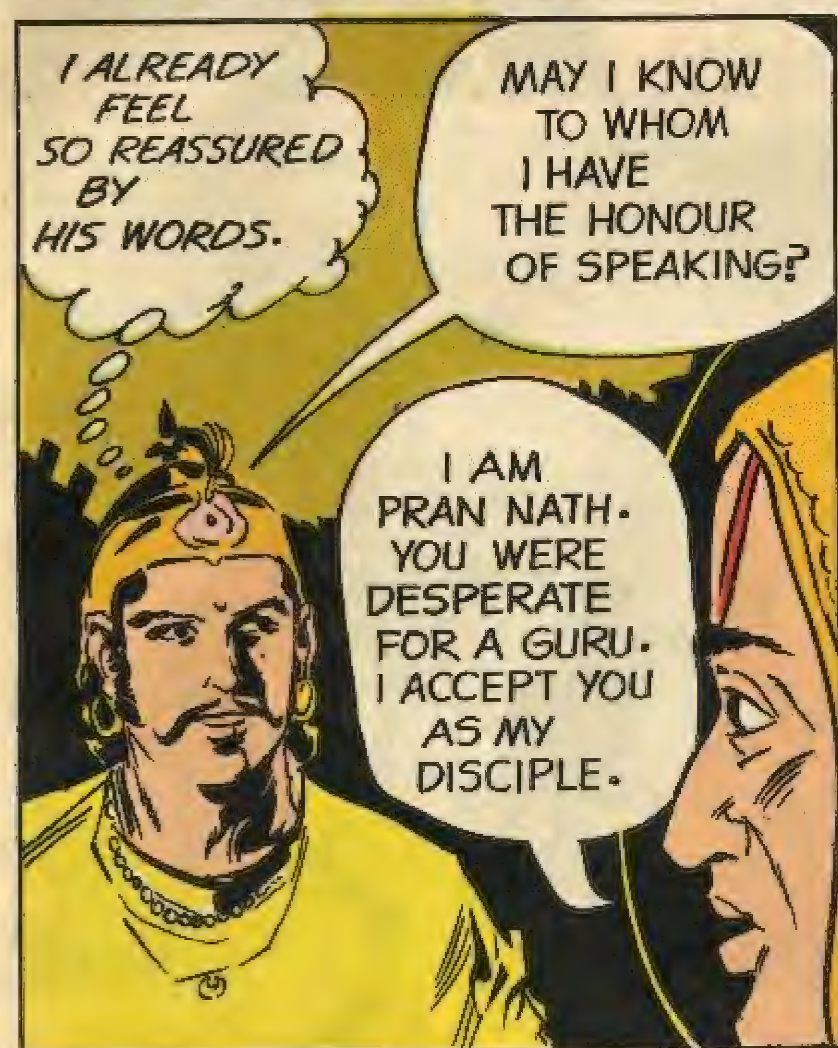

HE WALKED TOWARDS IT AND CAME UPON A HUT.


I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU CHHATRASAL.
AMAZING! I'VE NEVER MET HIM, YET HE KNOWS ME – HAS BEEN WAITING FOR ME.


CHHATRASAL WAS OVERWHELMED BY THE FEELINGS THAT CAME OVER HIM.
SURPRISING HOW CLOSE I FEEL TOWARDS THIS TOTAL STRANGER.
HAVE A LITTLE WATER BEFORE WE TALK.







WHAT HE SAID NEXT MADE CHHATRASAL'S HEART LEAP WITH RENEWED HOPE.





IN THE MORNING, CHHATRASAL CAME BACK TO PRAN NATH.

SIR, IT HAPPENED JUST AS YOU SAID.

NOW GO AHEAD AND RAISE YOUR ARMY. I WILL BUILD UP PUBLIC OPINION TO SUPPORT YOU AGAINST THE MUGHALS.

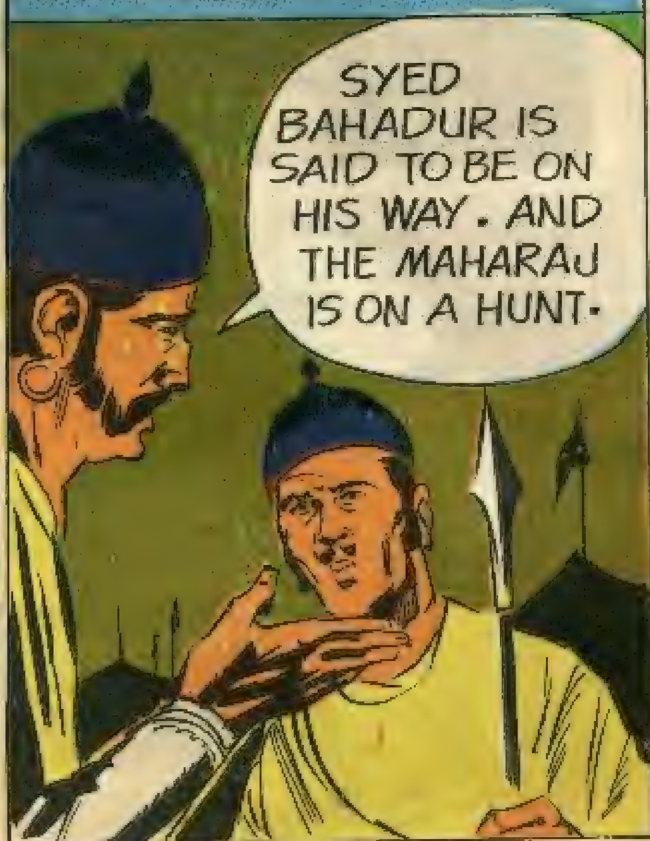
MEN ENLISTED IN CHHATRASAL'S ARMY BY THE HUNDREDS AND SOON MANY AREAS WERE LIBERATED.

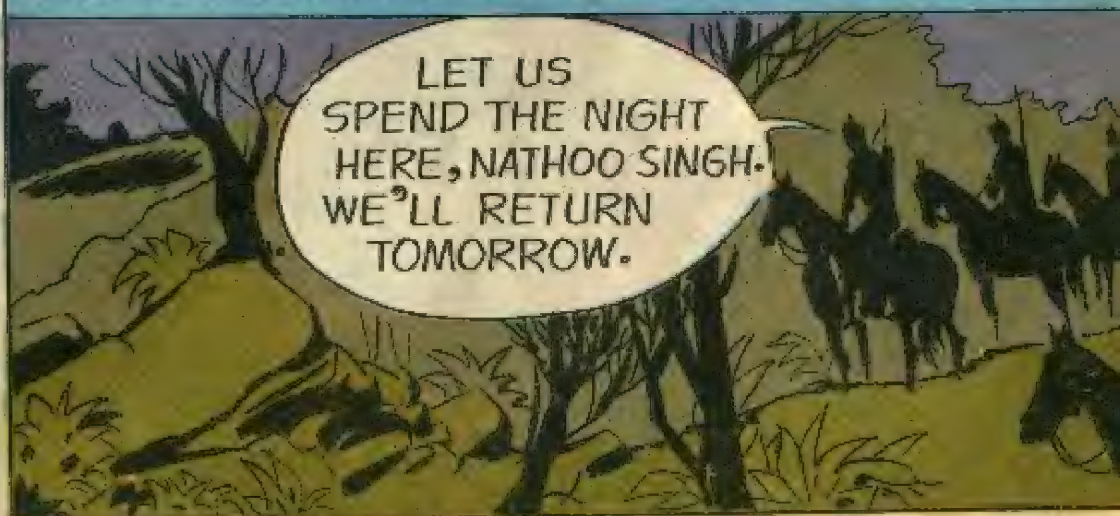
AT THE COURT OF AURANGZEB —

SIR, CHAMPATRAI'S SON CHHATRASAL HAS CREATED A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE.

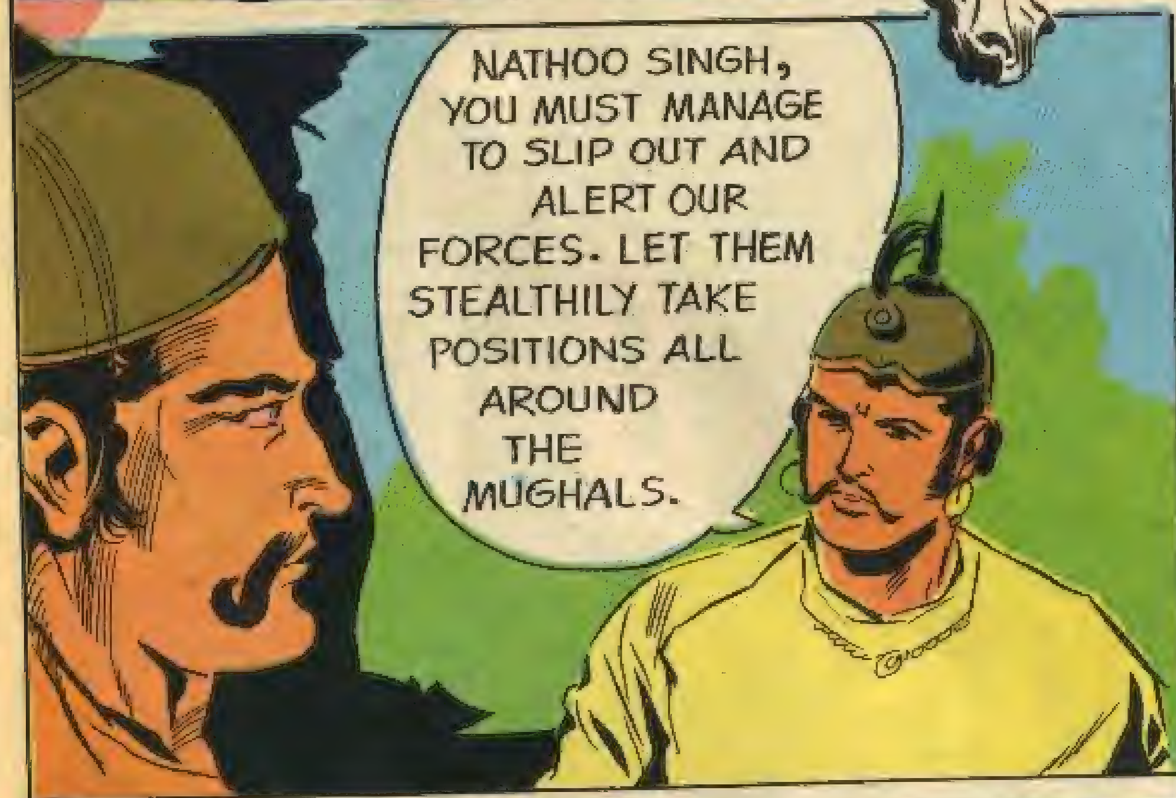


THE MUGHAL FORCES, UNDER THE COMMAND OF SYED BAHADUR, ADVANCED TOWARDS BUNDELKHAND.






THE FOLLOWING MORNING—
MAHARAJ, WE ARE SURROUNDED BY MUGHAL SOLDIERS.


NATHOO SINGH, YOU MUST MANAGE TO SLIP OUT AND ALERT OUR FORCES. LET THEM STEALTHILY TAKE POSITIONS ALL AROUND THE MUGHALS.


I'LL GIVE A SIGNAL WHEN THE MUGHALS CLOSE IN ON ME. LET OUR MEN ATTACK THEN.


NATHOO SINGH SLIPPED OUT OF THE MUGHAL CORDON.



THE MOMENT THE UNSUSPECTING MUGHALS CLOSED IN ON CHHATRASAL—

HAR HAR MAHADEV



...HIS FORCES, WHO WERE IN HIDING TILL THEN, SUDDENLY ATTACKED FROM BEHIND.

THE SURPRISE ATTACK LEFT THE MUGHALS COMPLETELY IN DISARRAY.


AT THE MUGHAL COURT –
GREATLY OUTNUMBERED, A HANDFUL OF SOLDIERS THOROUGHLY ROUTED YOU. AREN'T YOU ASHAMED? RUHALLA KHAN, TAKE AS LARGE A FORCE AS YOU WANT AND FINISH OFF THE BUNDELAS – ONCE AND FOR ALL.


RUHALLA KHAN IS ADVANCING WITH A VERY LARGE FORCE – WHILE OUR ARMY IS DEPLETED – MORE THAN EVER.
DON'T LOSE COURAGE. THIS WILL BE A BATTLE OF WITS.


CHHATRASAL IS REPORTED TO HAVE GONE INTO HIDING WITH HIS TROOPS IN THE HILLS.
THIS TIME HE IS FACING ME – RUHALLA KHAN! CHHATRASAL CAN'T GET AWAY – HIDE WHERE HE MAY!

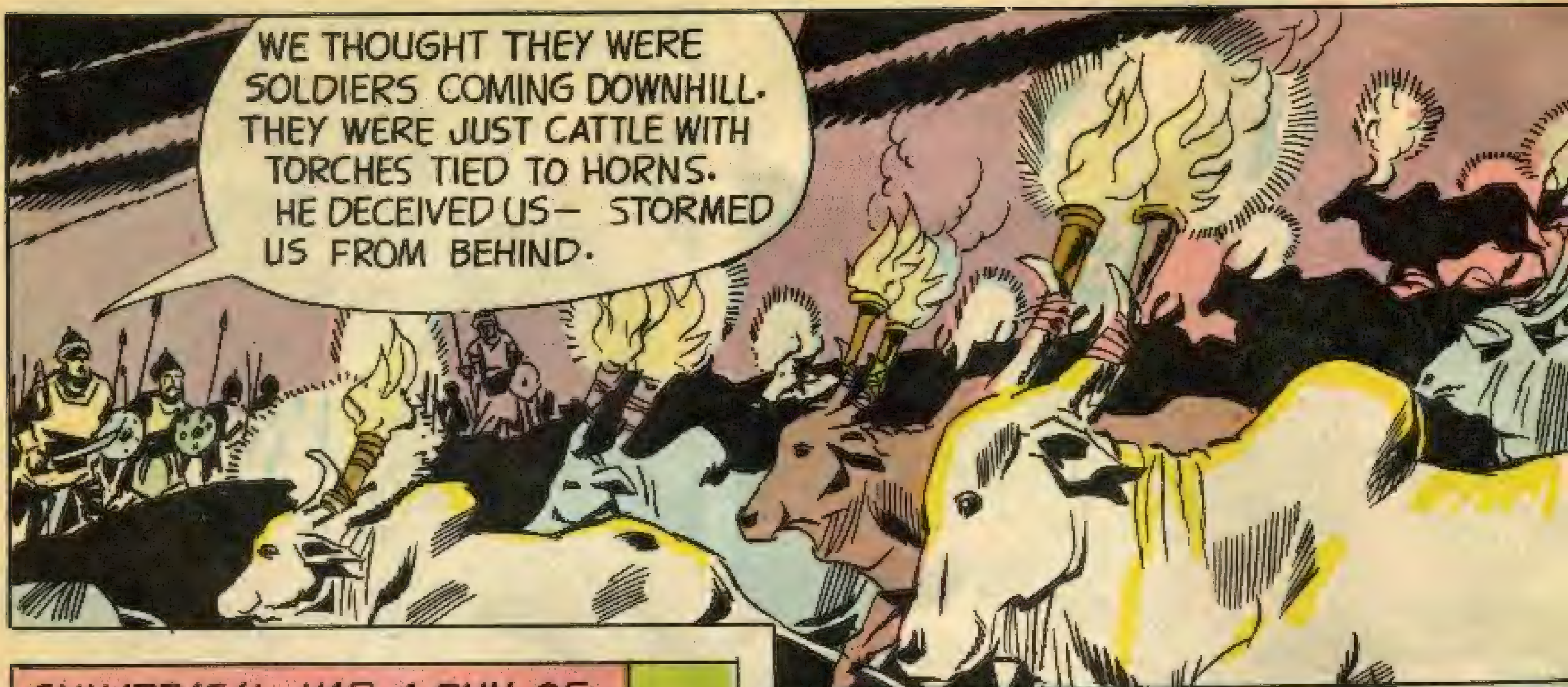

TOMORROW MORNING WE WILL ATTACK. MEANWHILE TONIGHT...
...YOU'LL RELAX. THEY WILL BEGIN AS SOON AS YOU ARE READY.






THE MUGHAL SOLDIERS RUSHED TOWARDS THE HILL.
HEY! CHHATRASAL IS OUT TO ATTACK. LOOK AT THAT HILL.
THAT'S A BIG BATTALION CARRYING TORCHES.


MEANWHILE –
RUN... RUN...
CHHATRASAL HAS ATTACKED. ... ON THAT HILL– IT WAS A RUSE.

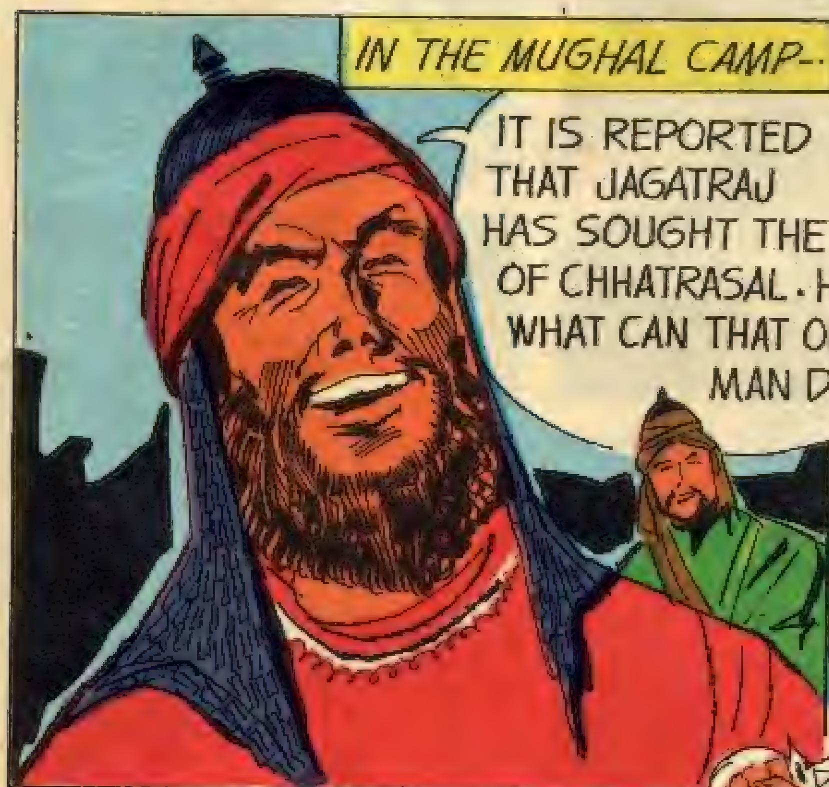

WE THOUGHT THEY WERE SOLDIERS COMING DOWNHILL. THEY WERE JUST CATTLE WITH TORCHES TIED TO HORNS. HE DECEIVED US— STORMED US FROM BEHIND.
CHHATRASAL HAD TAKEN THE ADVICE OF SHIVAJI SERIOUSLY.


CHHATRASAL HAD A RUN OF VICTORIES.
I AM PROUD OF YOUR VICTORY.
I NOW WANT TO SET UP A CAPITAL IN PANNA.


A GOOD IDEA. WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF YOUR ARMY?
FORTY THOUSAND INFANTRY AND TWELVE THOU-SAND MOUNTED SOLDIERS AND THREE HUN-DRED GUNNERS.


AFTER THE CAPITAL WAS ESTABLISHED IN PANNA—
MAHARAJ! DALEL KHAN, THE COMMANDER OF MOHAMMAD KHAN BANGAS, IS ALREADY ADVANCING WITH A VERY LARGE FORCE.
MY SON JAGATRAJ, CAN TAKE CARE OF DALEL KHAN. I WILL SEND HIM WITH A REGIMENT.

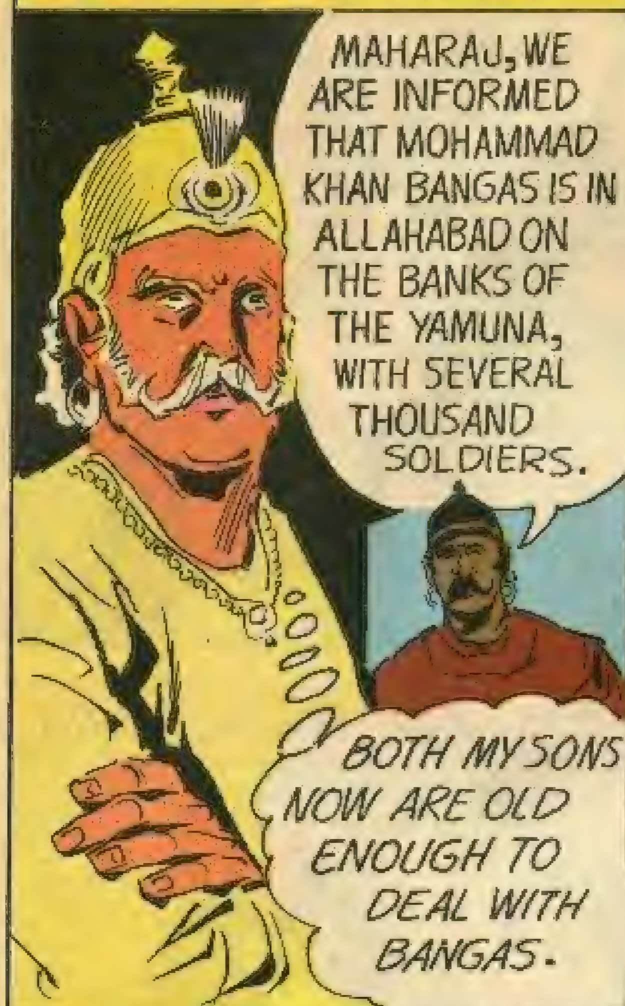

THE INEXPERIENCED JAGATRAJ HAD A HARD TIME FIGHTING DALEL KHAN.
TAKE THE QUICKEST WAY TO PANNA, AND TELL KAKAJAO (CHHATRASAL) THAT DALEL KHAN HAS A VERY LARGE FORCE AND ASK HIM TO COME IMMEDIATELY.


IN THE MUGHAL CAMP--
IT IS REPORTED THAT JAGATRAJ HAS SOUGHT THE HELP OF CHHATRASAL. HA! HA! WHAT CAN THAT OLD MAN DO?


MEANWHILE THE "OLD MAN" MARCHED WITH REINFORCEMENTS.


FIGHTING THE "OLD MAN" WAS NO JOKE AS DALEL KHAN DISCOVERED.
DALEL KHAN! HERE I AM AND THIS IS MY SWORD.

VICTORY WAS CHHATRASAL'S. BUT THERE WAS NO RESPITE.



THE BUNDELAS ENGAGED MOHAMMAD KHAN BANGAS.



AT CHHATRASAL'S COURT



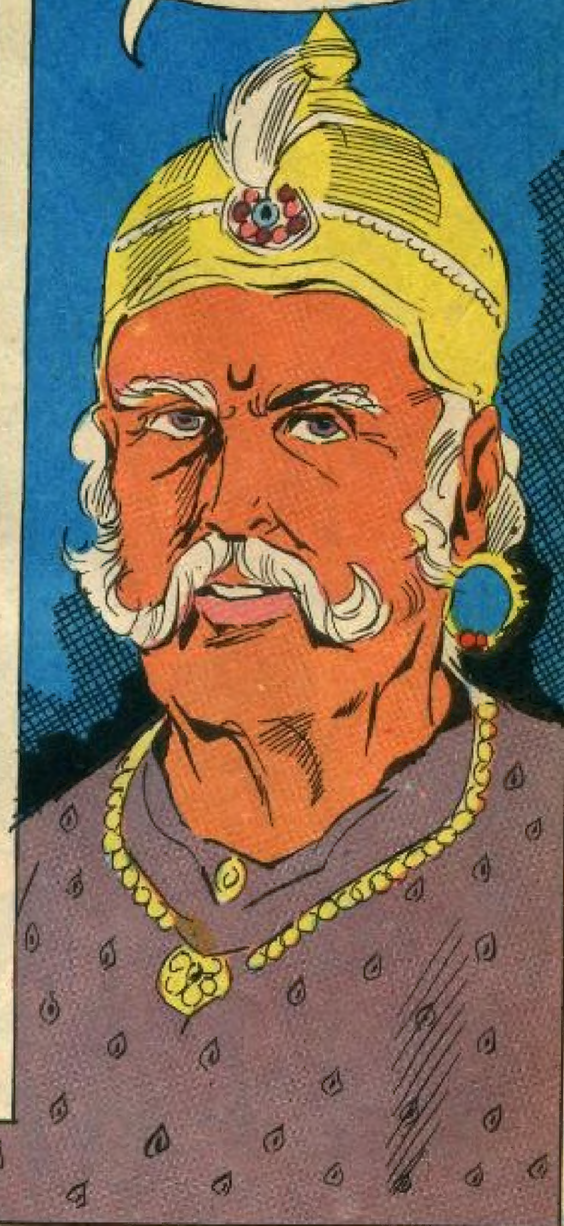







IN THE PRESENCE OF BAJI RAO –
THE BUNDELAS WILL NOT LOSE AS LONG AS BAJI RAO IS ALIVE.


ANY WORD FROM THE PESHWA?
THE PESHWA HAS ARRIVED. HIS ARMY AND OURS TOGETHER HAVE BESIEGED BANGAS IN THE FORT OF JAITPUR.

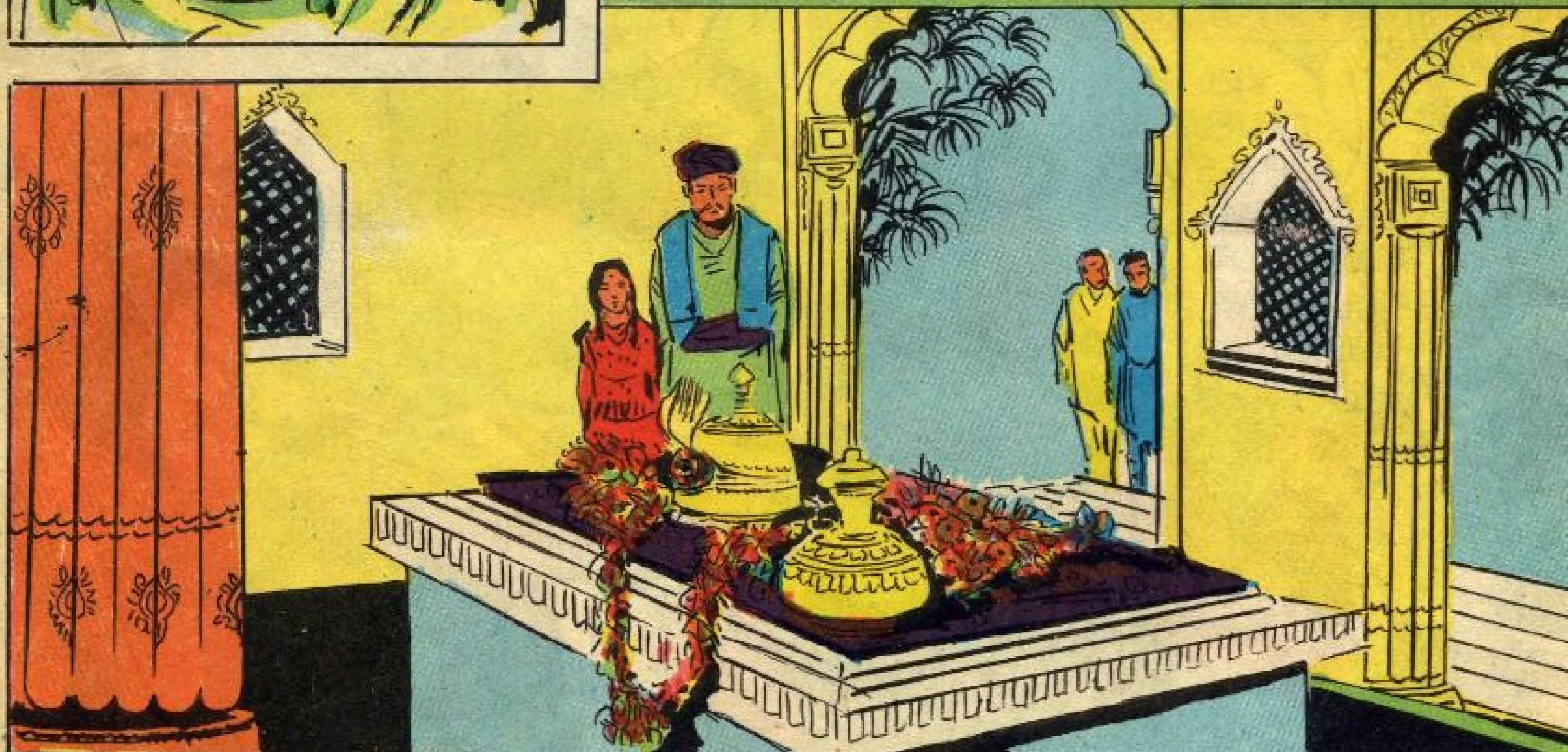

GOD BLESS HIM! HE IS A FRIEND INDEED.


INSIDE THE BESIEGED FORT, BANGAS WAS IN DIRE STRAITS.
WE HAVE NO FOOD GRAINS, SIR.
KILL THE CAMELS AND HORSES AND EAT THEM... IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH, EAT ONE ANOTHER!


AT LAST BANGAS HAD TO SURRENDER.

THE ENEMY HAD BEEN GIVEN A CRUSHING DEFEAT. TO COMMEMORATE THE VICTORY, CHHATRASAL ORDERED SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS.

CHHATRASAL LIVED TILL A RIPE OLD AGE AND BROUG
PEACE AND PROSPERITY TO THE WIDE REGION OF
CENTRAL INDIA, RULED BY HIM. THE GRATEFUL PEC
CHERISH HIS MEMORY TO THIS DAY.



CHHATRASAL : the founder of the

Kingdom of Bundelkhand

#41

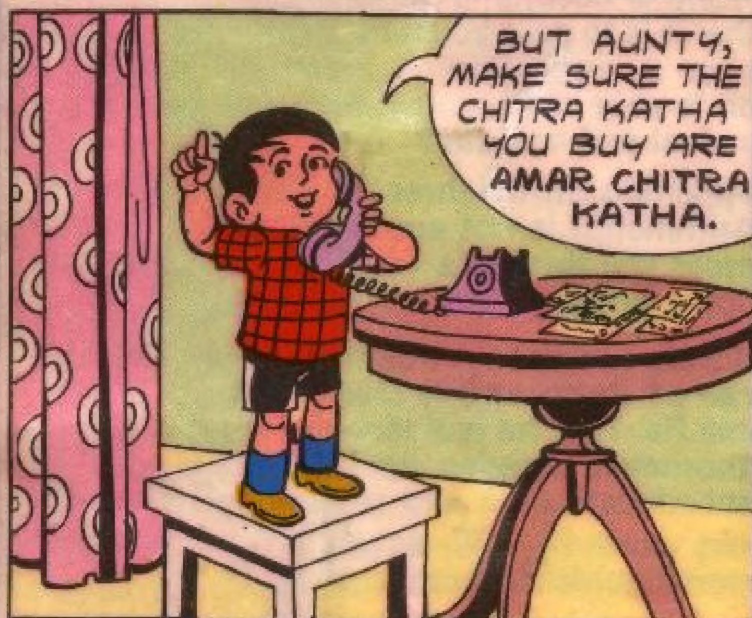
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CHAWLA

THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT















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- who care for children
- who screen each word and each picture as they have a lasting impact on impressionable minds.
- for whom Chitra Katha is more a vehicle of education than a business.

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